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ABSTRACT

An instructional module designed to help prepare college-level teaching assistants (TAs) for their duties in second language instruction is presented. The module focuses on helping learners become skilled at second language listening. The first part provides background information about this language skill. It introduces the process of listening by describing listening and listening comprehension within a cognitive, information- processing framework. The use of listening strategies for comprehension is then examined, followed by discussion of four curriculum planning issues: determining goals and objectives; matching goals and objectives with teaching techniques and materials; planning the listening lesson; and use of video materials. The second part presents more practical suggestions, techniques, and activities for working with textbook tape programs and video materials, for teaching and practicing listening strategies, and for two-way, interactive listening in the classroom. Contains 22 references. (MSE)

Listening in a Foreign Language

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Introduction

Whether at work, at play, or in managing our day-to-day life, we use listening far more than any other language skill. It has been estimated that adults spend almost half of their communication time listening, and students may receive as much as 90 percent of their in-school information through listening to teachers and to each other! However, not all listening is the same: a "Hi! How are ya doin'?" on the way to class will not normally tax our listening abilities, but listening to a lecture or learning a foreign language will. These situations will require a more intense and analytical kind of listening.

We know that listening is requisite to language learning: it provides the aural input which serves as the basis for acquisition and learning, and it enables us to interact in spoken communication. Given the importance of listening in language learning and teaching, it becomes essential that we know how to help our students become effective listeners. We hope that his module will help you accomplish just that.

Part One of this module will provide you with background information which will heighten your awareness and understanding of this most crucial language skill. It introduces the process of listening by describing listening and listening comprehension within a cognitive, information-processing framework. Next, listening instruction is presented from a strategic perspective, that of teaching and learning *how* to listen. The section which follows deals with the characteristics and purposes of listening and is geared toward helping you determine listening goals and objectives for your course. Finally, the materials section presents criteria for evaluating, adapting, and developing different types of listening materials, especially video materials.

Part Two presents more practical suggestions, techniques, and activities for working with textbook tape programs and video materials, for teaching and practicing listening strategies, and for two-way, interactive listening in the classroom.

Before we begin examining these topics, pause and think about your own listening behavior, in your native language. Think of it within these situations: Have you ever been in a restaurant and become obsessed with a conversation at another table? Could you understand what they were talking about? What did you do to try to figure out the conversation? How about this situation: You are attending a lecture and taking notes. Visualize your notes. What do they look like? Do you always take notes the same way? What determines how you take notes? Finally, do you listen to the radio when you get up in the morning? What do you listen for? How do you listen? Do you turn on the television instead? Do you watch or do you listen? Do you do both? Your purpose for listening is different in each of these situations, and so are the strategies you use to understand what you've heard. But we don't focus much on listening in our first language. After all, listening is...well...listening: we do it effortlessly, we take it for granted. It isn't until we attempt another language that listening demands conscious effort and at times overwhelms us.

PART ONE

Listening as Process

What is listening?

Listening can be described as an on-going series of processes which occur within the listener. Most descriptions of listening account for four interrelated components: hearing (or perceiving), attending, comprehending, and remembering. Individual physical and cognitive variables as well as situational, motivational, and attitudinal factors mediate and affect all aspects of listening. Thus, background noise or a cold may prevent the listener from hearing adequately; tiredness or lack of interest may lead a listener to consciously or unconsciously "tune out"; lack of familiarity with the topic or problems with vocabulary or syntax may result in miscomprehension; and all of these factors may impede recall.

Listening has also been characterized as a transaction, as it involves a sender (a person, radio, television) and a receiver (the listener). This transaction is defined by the short-lived nature of the message and the receiver's lack of control over what he or she hears. Thus listeners are forced to process messages as they come: (1) immediately, whether they are prepared to receive the information or if they are still processing what they have just heard; (2) without backtracking or looking ahead; and (3) with the sender's choice of features (e.g., vocabulary, structural complexity, rate of delivery). The complexity of this process is magnified in the second language context, where the receiver also has incomplete control of the language.

What is listening comprehension?

Far from passively receiving and recording aural input, listeners actively involve themselves in the interpretation of what they hear, bringing their own background knowledge and their linguistic knowledge to bear on the information contained in the aural text. Again, this process is influenced by individual learner characteristics such as learning style, strategy use, and affective factors, as well as by variables related to the listening text.

Although comprehension is usually the desired and expected outcome of listening (especially in educational contexts), we will not be surprised by the fact that comprehension is not a precondition of listening. As listening is a covert process, we are not able to observe the listener's progress or developing problems; therefore, we can only confirm comprehension through an overt response—a spoken or written communication, an action, a gesture. It may be helpful to think of the components of listening—hearing, attending, comprehending, and remembering—as operating continuously, but at differing levels of efficiency and success, depending on the host of variables which each listener brings to the task, on the text itself, and on environmental conditions. A most variable and idiosyncratic process indeed.

An information-processing model of listening comprehension

Cognition is the act or process of knowing. Cognitive theory defines language learning as the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill (McLaughlin, 1987). From this perspective, the acquisition of language entails the use of information-processing techniques to represent, organize, transform, and integrate information. Information-processing models are used to represent how new information is acquired, stored, and retrieved from memory (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

The **information-processing model** presented in Figure 1 (at the end of the text) graphically represents listening comprehension in terms of a cognitive skill. This model and the discussion below are based on Atkinson and Shiffrin's pioneering work on the structure of memory (Daehler and Bukatko, 1985). The diagram may be shared and discussed with students to focus and heighten their awareness of what comprehending aural input actually involves. At the very least, it is important that you, the language instructor, have an understanding of the process of listening comprehension. It is important to remember that we cannot directly observe or measure what is happening in the mind and that models such as this are used as metaphors, not depictions of the workings of the human mind. The diagram and discussion below should help you begin to focus on listening as a *process* rather than on listening as a *product*.

In information processing, memory is represented by three separate "stores": sensory or echoic memory, short-term or working memory, and long-term memory. In the first and most basic stage of processing, the listener perceives sounds and retains them in **sensory memory** for perhaps one second or less. At this point, bits of language may be noticed— possibly because of particular features related to already stored knowledge (Gass, 1988), processed further, and recognized as sound patterns. Processed information passes on to short-term memory in the form of words, but information which has not been processed is replaced by later input. It is easy to understand the beginning language student's dilemma: sound is perceived as a continuous stream with no boundaries, nothing to hook onto and pass on to the next stage of processing.

The second memory store, **short-term memory**, is also temporary, but has a larger capacity of about 20 to 60 seconds (Coakley and Wolvin, 1983) and about seven "chunks" of information. It is here that meaningful mental representations are formed. In order to hold more information in short-term memory, groups of items are chunked (organized according to a pattern) into syntactic, semantic, or phonologic units of meaning (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). As your students learn the language, they gain more and better ways to organize or chunk the incoming information into larger units. This chunking process enables them to retain more in short-term memory at one time and to avoid "overload" (Byrnes, 1984), or the information backing up in short-term memory and being lost before it has a chance to be organized. Background knowledge, or prior knowledge of the topic of the input, also helps organize the information into larger chunks. (It was this lack of background knowledge that foiled our attempts to understand what the folks at the table next to us were talking about.)

Two other processes, rehearsal and elaboration, may occur in short-term memory and increase processing capacity. Rehearsal, or actively repeating items, allows information to be

maintained longer in short-term memory. This is how we usually retain telephone or other numbers until we can write them down. In the classroom or in individual study, a certain amount of meaningful repetition (where a connection is being made between the language and its meaning) will also facilitate passage into long-term memory. Elaboration consists of relating information to things we already know (for example, mnemonic devices for vocabulary learning). Not all of the information which reaches short-term memory passes on to long-term memory, the permanent store (imagine if it did!), but rehearsal and elaboration help make the chunks more available for transfer.

Only extracted, semantic meanings pass on to **long-term memory**, where an unlimited number of items are held for an indefinite period of time. The mental representations which reach long-term memory are then related and incorporated into existing knowledge. How information is organized and accessed in long-term memory has been of great interest to all who are concerned with how we learn. Theorists have attempted to answer several questions.

Once information reaches long-term memory, is it all stored in the same way?

It has been hypothesized (Anderson, 1980) that extracted meanings are stored as either procedural knowledge (information about how to do things), or as declarative knowledge (information about things). An example of procedural knowledge would be how to recognize regular verbs in the past tense; an example of declarative knowledge would be the meanings of those same verbs.

How are those bits of declarative knowledge organized?

Declarative knowledge is not stored in single items, but in organized mental structures called schemata (singular, schema). These large information structures (which can perhaps be conceptualized as a word web), are organized around a topic or theme and contain many levels of information related to the topic. For example, a dancing schema may contain "sound pictures" of different types of music, dance steps, social situations, feelings and emotions, and any other experiences the holder of the schema may possess. Everyone's schemata are different. Some schemata will be very rich, others will be very lean, and the information contained therein may all be different. Cultural background has a very important effect on a person's schemata. Certainly a Cuban instructor's dancing schema will be very different from her American students' dancing schema.

Do we search through all of our schemata every time we access information?

Some schemata are organized as scripts (situation-specific knowledge about real-life situations), others as story grammars (representations of how various types of discourse are organized). It is believed that listeners generate expectancies of meaning through scripts and story grammars. The closer the fit between what is heard and the sequence the listeners anticipate through their scripts and story grammars, the more successful and efficient will the comprehension of the aural message be. Often one of the first things our foreign language students learn are scripts of greetings and salutations. Once they've learned these scripts, they can process them automatically and devote their conscious attention to other parts of the input.

Doesn't it take a long time to access all this information?

When we initially attempt a task, we have to devote a lot of attentional resources to it in order to perform it. As we learn and practice the task, it becomes automatic and it is performed effortlessly. The more tasks we learn, practice, and automatize in the foreign language, the more attentional resources and memory capacity are available for new information (McLaughlin, 1987).

Developing Strategic Listeners

While the discussion above should serve to make you aware of the complexity of the processes involved in the comprehension of a listening text, it is not designed to scare you from the prospect of getting your students to that effortless level of second language listening proficiency which, after all, you have managed to attain. But first they must take baby steps. Our charge at the beginning stages of listening instruction is to introduce our students to strategies which will enable them to cope with input which they may have only half-understood or perhaps not understood at all.

What are listening strategies?

Listening strategies are **cognitive learning strategies**. They are specific techniques or activities which contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of the listening input (Rubin, 1987). Listening strategies are well known to us as teachers and as students, for they are listening skills or activities such as listening for the gist, listening for detail, making an inference, or summarizing.

These strategies can be classified as either top-down or bottom-up, depending on how the listener processes the input. **Top-down strategies** such as inferencing or predicting, rely on the listener's personal background knowledge and expectations about both language and the world (Morley, 1991). This knowledge allows the listener to interpret the text on the basis of context: the preceding linguistic context, and the situation, topic, setting, and participants. For example, your students are listening to a taped dialog in which Mr. Wong, the director of a secondary school, is introducing Ms. Min, a new teacher, to the rest of the faculty. Based on previous knowledge of the formality of the setting and the participants, and of greetings and salutations, they can expect to hear "How do you do!", or "I'm pleased to meet you!" rather than "Hi!" when the director says, "Let me introduce you to Ms. Min."

Bottom-up strategies, as the term indicates, rely on the actual language in the listening input. It is the understanding of sounds, words, and grammatical characteristics to arrive at meaning (Richards, 1983). Bottom-up strategies include scanning for specific details, recognizing cognates, or recognizing word-order patterns.

While cognitive strategies are tied to specific tasks and applied to specific materials or situations, a second type of strategies, **metacognitive strategies**, contribute indirectly to our comprehension and recall by acting as regulators or orchestrators of all learning. Metacognitive strategies are "thinking about learning" strategies, that is, they are generic and are used with all

different language skills and types of learning tasks (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning. So, if we describe metacognitive strategies in terms of listening, we could say that planning would involve deciding which listening (or cognitive) strategies would serve us best in a particular situation. While listening we would monitor our comprehension as well as the effectiveness of the strategies we chose. Finally, we would determine if we had achieved our comprehension goals and decide if we wanted to continue using this particular combination of strategies in similar listening tasks in the future.

Who are strategic listeners?

Strategic listeners are proficient listeners. They are listeners who:

- are aware of their listening processes;
- have a repertoire of listening strategies, and know which work best for them, with which listening tasks;
- use various listening strategies in combination and vary the combinations with the listening task;
- are flexible in their use of strategies and will try a different strategy if the one they originally chose does not work for them;
- use both bottom-up and top-down strategies; and
- plan, monitor, and evaluate before, during, and after listening.

Although less proficient listeners have and use a variety of strategies, they tend to use the wrong strategy for their listening purpose; they don't show flexibility by trying different strategies until one works (Vann and Abraham, 1990). These listeners tend to become distracted, frustrated, and uninterested, and are not successful in monitoring their comprehension. Less proficient listeners also seem to be more dependent on bottom-up decoding of the listening text, to the detriment of processing speed and accuracy of comprehension (Chamot and Küpper, 1989).

How can our students become strategic listeners?

Our goal as language instructors is student autonomy. We want to produce students who, even if they don't have complete control of the grammar or an extensive lexicon, can at least fend for themselves in communicative situations. If this is our goal, we must teach students how to listen. Listening skills can't be acquired just through exposure to language; they need to be explicitly taught and practiced.

Rixon (1981) suggests that proficient listeners (in both first and second language) follow four basic steps to extract meaning from a listening text:

- *They figure out the purpose for listening, predict and anticipate some of what they will hear, and assess their background knowledge of the topic.* In real life we listen for a purpose, and that purpose, together with the context of listening, acts to create expectations of what we are about to hear. Depending on our knowledge, our interest, and our need, we decide to listen more or less

attentively. For example, you get up in the morning and turn on the radio to get the weather report. Your purpose is to find out what the weather will be so you can dress accordingly. It is August, you're in Washington, D.C., and the sky is cloudy—based on your background knowledge of the context, you anticipate hot weather and possibly rain.

- *They decide how much of what tney're hearing is relevant to the purpose they have already identified, and selectively ignore or attend to parts of the listening input.* This selectivity is crucial, especially at the beginning stages of language learning, as it enables the student to focus on particular items in the input and reduces the amount of information the student has to hold in short-term memory in order to recognize it. To continue with our example, depending on the station to which you are tuned, you will be getting lots of commercials, music, news, and other chatter. Your ability to selectively attend will enable you to tune out much of what you hear while still keeping your "antenna" up for the weather forecast.

- *As they listen, they use top-down and bottom-up strategies flexibly and interactively depending on the purpose, the difficulty of the input, and their background knowledge.* Top-down and bottom-up strategies are not necessarily sequential, but simultaneous and interactive. The text-based identification strategies and the listener-based interpretation strategies interact and blend in the construction of meaning. In the case of our weather report, you will be listening—bottom-up—for certain words or numbers, or even music that will alert you to the coming forecast. The context knowledge we mentioned above will help you interpret the input "from the top down."

- *They check their comprehension while they're listening and when the listening task is over.* Monitoring comprehension is key for all listeners, and critical for beginning listeners who may invest themselves in a totally erroneous interpretation of a text. Monitoring comprehension helps students detect inconsistencies and comprehension failures, directing them to use alternative strategies. To round out our example, monitoring will lead you to question your comprehension of a forecast of fifty degrees or of snow. Your alternative strategy will probably be to stay tuned until the weather report is repeated.

As discussed above, research on "the good language learner" provides us with suggestions of effective listening behaviors to model for our students. Additionally, the learning strategy training literature presents us with ideas on how to introduce, practice, and evaluate our students' use of listening strategies. The suggestions listed below are not, for the most part, extra things to do in the classroom, but different ways of perceiving and presenting listening instruction by focusing on the process of listening rather than on its product.

- *Develop awareness of the listening process and of the listening strategies your*

students use in their native language. Present and discuss (in the first language) the graphic in Figure 1. Ask questions such as the ones posed in the introduction to this module. Get students to think and talk about how they listen. It will probably be the first time they do this.

- *When you work with a listening assignment in class, show students the strategies that work best, considering the purpose and the type of text*. Provide a rationale. Explain why they should use the strategies. Call the strategies by name, e.g., "Let's find the main idea of this passage", or "Paraphrase what Lucinda says". Describe the steps necessary to use the strategies. Model how *you* would use the strategy and allow them to practice with you.

- *Practice the strategies in class, and ask your students to practice them outside of class in their listening assignments*. Review your tape workbook for listening and metacognitive strategies (remember that listening activities and skills are cognitive strategies). Bring them to your students' attention. Encourage them to be conscious of what they're doing while they complete the listening tape assignments.

- *Encourage your students to evaluate their comprehension and their strategy use immediately after completing an assignment*. Build comprehension checks into your in-class assignments and out-of-class listening worksheets. Periodically ask students if specific strategies are working for them and review how and when to use particular strategies. Don't forget the metacognitives.

- *Don't assume that your students will transfer strategy use from one task to another*. Explicitly mention how a particular strategy can be used in a different type of listening task or with another skill. There is a great deal of strategy crossover between reading and listening. Explain how scanning, for example, may be similar and different in each language skill.

Determining Your Goals and Objectives: Roles, Modes, Functions, and Purposes of Listening

For many years listening was misdesignated the "passive" language skill, conceivably because the listening act is, at least outwardly, a quiet activity. Now that we've seen just how complex the listening process is on the "inside," we're going to look at the conditions which affect listening on the outside. The sections that follow will present you with four dimensions which will be key to setting the goals and objectives of your listening program and lessons.

There are many ways to describe the listening act and many conditions in which it occurs. We have already mentioned the importance of the purpose for listening. Listening can also be described according to the role the listener assumes (participant, addressee, audience

member, or overhearer), the listening mode (one-way or two-way), and the function of the listening act (interactional or transactional). Listener roles, modes, and functions will be briefly described below.

Listener roles

Rost (1990), defines roles in terms of the degree of active participation by the listener in the discourse. He lists four possible listener roles:

- A listener may be a **participant** in a conversation. This person is spoken to directly and can respond to others involved in the conversation. Role plays or other negotiation of meaning activities will involve students as participants.

- An **addressee** is also spoken to directly, but doesn't have the same range of involvement as the participant. Students may tend to take the role of addressee if at lower levels of proficiency or in a teacher-centered classroom.

- **Audience members** are directly addressed, but are not expected to respond, although they may act upon the information received. Following directions would put a student in the role of audience member.

- An **overhearer** can hear, but is not being addressed and cannot respond. Many listening practice tasks place students in the role of overhearer, where the student's comprehension is assessed through some type of test question.

Modes, functions, and purposes

According to Morley (1991) listening may take place in two different forms: **two-way** exchanges or interactions, or **one-way** communications. The former are exchanges between two or more persons; the latter may consist of overhearing conversations or listening to announcements, the radio, television, a lecture, or a message on voice mail. Two-way communications often serve an **interactional function,** where the main purpose is a social exchange. One-way communications frequently serve a **transactional function** since they involve the transfer or exchange of information. Nevertheless, some two-way conversations are also transactions, e.g., buying an airplane ticket. Interactional exchanges are people-oriented; they may be indirect or vague and very dependent on context. On the other hand, transactional exchanges are message-oriented; their aim is to convey information in a clear and precise manner.

Purposes for listening may range from identifying and assigning meaning to sounds, to gaining information, participating in a social situation, evaluating a message, and listening for entertainment. More specific "real-life" listening purposes would be: recognizing a call of "Fire!"; listening to advice from a doctor or lawyer, or interviewing someone; attending a wedding or other ceremony; critically listening to a political advertisement; or viewing a movie or other theatrical performance.

Is it important for your students to be able to label their listening modes, functions, and purposes? Perhaps not. But it is important that they be made aware of how they must adjust their listening behavior to successfully deal with a variety of situations, types of input, and listening purposes. In other words, to achieve the listening goals and objectives you have set for them.

Matching Your Goals and Objectives: Evaluating, Adapting, and Developing Listening Materials

Most first through fourth semester (beginning and intermediate) textbook language programs include listening comprehension and pronunciation practice as part of their laboratory tape component. Some textbooks integrate listening practice into classroom instruction with an additional classroom tape; others provide students with their own copies of the classroom tape to complete the exercises at home. Separate laboratory tape components are usually not included with fifth and sixth semester (advanced) language texts, although student tapes of reading selections and dialogues are sometimes found.

As mentioned above, a well-rounded listening program will provide students with a range of practice opportunities. Your responsibility as instructor may be to evaluate the existing listening activities to see if they conform to your program's goals and objectives. It may be that you will have to modify or adapt listening activities to the needs of your program or to the needs of your student population, or you may find that you want to design your own listening activities to supplement those in the textbook or for some other special purpose. The criteria described below will serve as a guide as you evaluate, adapt, or design listening materials for your own class or for your language program.

Construct the listening activity around a contextualized task.

Task-based listening exercises specify the purpose for listening and how the student will respond. Contextualized listening activities approximate real-life tasks and, as in real life, provide the listener with an idea of the type of information to expect and what to do with it in advance of the actual listening. A beginning level task would be locating places on a map or drawing a simple picture. At an intermediate level students could follow a recipe or directions for assembling or fixing something.

Define the activity's instructional goal and type of response.

These are your instructional objectives for the listening activity or exercise. Each activity should have as its goal the improvement of a listening skill. As discussed in the preceding section, the selection of the skill to be practiced will depend on the situation and purpose for listening. In a seminal article, Richards (1983), lists 51 "micro-skills" required for conversational and for academic listening. These range from processing speech at different rates of delivery to recognizing key lexical items related to a topic. These micro-skills could be used as a point of departure in the evaluation or design of a listening program. Lund (1990) proposes a broader set of listening goals (see Table 1 at the end of the text) focused on ways of processing the aural message in one-way listening tasks. Lund also defines nine listener response categories

(see Table 2 at the end of the text), that is, what the listener does as a result of the task and in order to demonstrate comprehension. He suggests that the goals and response categories reflect a full range of listening competencies for audio tape, video, and one-way classroom tasks.

In addition to the responses in Table 2, Morley (1991, pp. 92-94) lists the following "communicative outcomes" appropriate tc both one- and two-way comprehension activities:

- listening and solving problems, such as working with games or puzzles;
- listening and evaluating information, as when preparing for a debate;
- interactive listening and negotiating meaning through questioning/answering routines; and
- listening for enjoyment, pleasure, and sociability, such as listening to songs, plays, or jokes.

As Morley cautions, a listening activity may have more than one goal or outcome, but care must be exercised that the beginning or intermediate listener not have his or her attention overburdened.

Evaluate your activities in terms of bottom-up/top down processing and of interactional and transactional functions.

Listening tasks can also be categorized in terms of their processing direction (top-down or bottom-up) and of the function they serve (interactional or transactional). In top-down activities, the listener taps into background knowledge to understand the meaning of what is being heard. Background or prior knowledge may be of the topic, of the situation or context, of the type of text, or it may be linguistic knowledge. Background knowledge activates a set of expectations with which to make inferences and predictions of the content of the text. Orientation, main idea comprehension, solving problems, evaluating information, negotiating meaning, and listening for enjoyment particularly draw on the student's background knowledge.

Bottom-up activities are those in which the listener relies on the language in the listening text itself to glean the meaning of what is being heard. These activities tap into the listener's knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Identification and detail comprehension are inherently bottom-up goals and will prescribe bottom-up responses.

As has been mentioned several times before, the purpose of the listening task will determine the response. Conversations (interactional listening) are often indirect and vague but rich in context. Top-down processes seem to predominate as the participants are able to fill out the details using their shared knowledge. On the other hand, transactional listening is informational and more dependent on bottom-up processes. This does not mean that the listener will never attend to detail in a conversation, or that top-down knowledge is not important in more formal listening situations, as in many cases interactional and transactional functions will alternate and the listener will need to adjust for the new purpose.

One word of caution: as you evaluate or design listening tasks keep in mind that complete recall of all the information in the text is an unrealistic expectation to which, under normal circumstances, even native speakers are not held. Those listening exercises which are meant to

train, not to test, should be success-oriented and build up the students' confidence in their listening ability.

Check the level of difficulty of the listening text.

How easy or difficult are the listening texts in your lab program or the listening selections you propose to use? You may want to consider the factors listed below as you judge the relative ease or difficulty of a listening text for a particular purpose and a particular group of students.

How is the information organized?

Texts in which the events are presented in natural chronological order, which have an informative title, and which present the information following an obvious organization (main ideas first, details and examples second) are easier to follow.

How familiar are the students with the topic?

Background knowledge can be supplied through pre-listening activities, but misapplication of background knowledge due to cultural differences can create major comprehension difficulties.

Does the text contain redundancy?

At the lower levels of proficiency, listeners may find short, simple messages easier to process, but students with higher proficiency benefit from the natural redundancy of the language. Lack of clear referents may be a greater problem than redundancy.

Does the text involve many individuals and objects? Are they clearly differentiated?

It is easier to understand a text with a doctor and a lawyer than with two lawyers, it is easier if they live in different countries, and it is even easier if they are of the opposite sex. In other words, the more marked the differences, the easier the comprehension.

Does the text offer visual support to aid in the interpretation of what the listeners hear?

Visual aids such as maps, diagrams, or pictures, or the images in a video, help contextualize the listening input and provide clues to meaning.

Does the story line, narrative, or instruction conform to familiar expectations?

We take much for granted as we listen. We automatically assume certain cause and effect relationships without bothering to analyze them. If we hear the shower running we expect a person to be taking the shower, not the character's houseplants!

It is entirely possible to use texts which present a higher level of difficulty if you grade the level of complexity of the listening tasks you design to a level appropriate to the students' proficiency. In this way the task mediates between the text and the listener to help facilitate comprehension. At the same time, a text may be used several times and explored at various levels by designing a variety of tasks, each with different goals or outcomes and responses.

Match the activities to the students' proficiency level.

Regardless of the level of proficiency of the students, listening activities should have interesting and motivating content, be based on good quality of taped or video materials, and be appropriate to the learners' needs. Several authors suggest listening activities suitable for beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. For example, Peterson (1991) presents a range of suggestions for bottom-up and for top-down exercises, and for activities which combine both top-down and bottom-up processing. Exercises of each type, as well as profiles of the listener, are provided for each level of proficiency.

Omaggio-Hadley (1993) lists many task types appropriate for building listening proficiency in learners at the novice/intermediate and the advanced/superior levels as defined by the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*. Some tasks that you can use with first-and second-year students are listening with visuals, filling in graphics and charts, listening for the gist, searching for specific clues to meaning, or distinguishing between formal and informal registers.

Provide students with opportunities to develop and practice listening strategies.

Suggestions for implementing strategy instruction were discussed in an earlier section. To recap: design listening tasks which raise students' awareness of the listening process and of the range of listening strategies available to them; design activities to practice specific strategies; model both metacognitive and cognitive listening strategies and provide guided practice; encourage students to evaluate and monitor their listening comprehension and their strategy use. In Part Two you will find suggestions of activities you can use to practice skimming, scanning, inferencing, and summarizing, and for planning for the listening task and monitoring and evaluating comprehension.

Planning the Listening Lesson: Pre-listening, While-listening, and Post-listening Activities

Now that we have discussed at length the elements that guide well-constructed and varied listening activities, we must turn our attention to how to deliver those activities. We need to organize the exercises and listening tasks into the kind of lessons that will facilitate and guide the students' comprehension and that will prove to be interesting and enjoyable listening experiences.

The "pre-, while-, post-" model described below was initially used for reading instruction and has proved to be equally successful when applied to listening. Each of the listening stages will be described below and suggestions given for activities which best suit each stage. You will see how the activities we have already discussed easily fit into each of these stages and how the other language skills can also be integrated into the listening lesson.

The pre-listening stage

In line with our attempts to make classroom listening experiences as close to real-life listening as possible, pre-listening activities help set the expectations we normally have before

we enter into a situation in which listening is required. If we go to the movies we at least know the title of the movie we're going to see and perhaps have read a review or two. If we have flown a few times, we can anticipate the airplane steward's safety instructions as our flight takes off. In the same manner, pre-listening activities prepare the students for what they are going to hear or view.

The activities chosen during pre-listening may serve as preparation for listening in several ways. During pre-listening the teacher may:

- assess students' background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text;
- provide students with the background knowledge necessary for their comprehension of the listening passage or activate the existing knowledge that the students possess;
- clarify any cultural information which may be necessary to comprehend the passage;
- make students aware of the type of text they will be listening to, the role they will play, and the purpose(s) for which they will be listening;
- provide opportunities for group or collaborative work and for background reading or class discussion activities.

Pre-listening activities may include:

- looking at pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs;
- reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures;
- reading something relevant;
- constructing semantic webs (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related);
- predicting the content of the listening text;
- going over the directions or instructions for the activity; and
- doing guided practice.

The while-listening stage

While-listening activities relate directly to the text. They are the activities that students are asked to do either during the time they are listening to the passage, video, or teacher narration; or immediately after. You should keep these points in mind when planning while-listening activities:

If students are asked to complete written activities during or immediately after listening they should be given an opportunity to read through the activity prior to listening.

Your students need to devote all their attentional resources to the listening task. Check that they understand the directions (especially if written in the target language) before the activity begins.

Keep writing to a minimum if the activity is to be completed during listening.

Remember that the primary task is comprehension, not production. Select simpler

activities for this stage, for example:

- circle an answer, a picture, or an object;
- order items or pictures;
- complete grids;
- follow a route on a map;
- fill in a picture;
- check off items in a list;
- complete cloze exercises.

If the response is to be given after listening (rather than during listening), the task or activity may be more demanding.

The activities you present immediately after listening to a passage or to segments of a passage may be more complex than the ones listed above. Make sure that the responses aren't just memory exercises, but that they reflect comprehension of the listening passage.

Organize your activities so that they guide the listeners through the text.

Include a combination of global activities such as getting the gist, the main idea, the topic, the setting; and selective listening activities which focus on details of content and form.

Use your activities to focus the students' attention on the parts or elements of the text crucial to the comprehension of the whole.

This technique allows you to present longer listening selections. Help students to listen more intensively to content-laden sections by providing activities which focus on detail.

When you use the same text for several purposes, it is better to listen to the same text several times.

Each time students listen with a different purpose. Don't require students to respond to several activities based on one listening opportunity.

Provide activities which encourage students to monitor their comprehension as they listen.

Monitoring doesn't seem to occur spontaneously; students must be trained to check their own comprehension as they listen. If you do a prediction activity, for example, always follow up with another activity to confirm or disconfirm the prediction. Remind students to review what they are gleaning from the passage to see if it makes sense in the context of their world knowledge and what they already know of the topic or events of the passage.

Give immediate feedback whenever possible.

It is particularly important to give immediate feedback when doing a series of activities based on the same text. Encourage students to examine how or why their responses were incorrect.

The post-listening stage

Post-listening activities take place after the text has been heard in its entirety and as many times as needed to accomplish the listening objectives. Post-listening activities serve three

general purposes: (1) to check the comprehension of the whole text and react to the text; (2) to evaluate students' listening skills and use of listening strategies; and (3) to extend the knowledge gained from the listening text to other contexts.

At this stage the activities need to be motivating and have a purpose of their own. While they are linked to the listening text, they may not necessarily involve listening, and they may be done outside the class. Post-listening activities:

- may expand on the topic or the language of the text and thus relate only loosely to the original passage;
- could relate to a pre-listening activity;
- may transfer what has been learned to reading, speaking, or writing activities.

Post-listening activities could include some of the response categories listed by Lund (Table 2) such as condensing, extending, or modeling. Role-plays, debates, outside research, creative writing, drawing, and problem-solving are possible post-listening activities. Always keep in mind the students' interest level. One brief post-listening activity may be all that the students' interest may bear.

Using Video Materials

The VCR and television monitor have become as pervasive in the language classroom as the blackboard. Video can enhance listening comprehension by providing learners with contextually rich, high interest, authentic, and culturally appropriate communicative situations. But, "showing a video" will not of itself lead to leaps in proficiency or cultural awareness. Videos are not intrinsically comprehensible to language learners—teachers must design the tasks which render them accessible. Second language video materials fall into two categories: materials which are designed and produced for pedagogical purposes, and authentic materials produced by native speakers for the consumption of fellow native speakers.

In the sections below we will build a rationale for using video for language instruction by describing how video facilitates listening comprehension. We will also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of pedagogic and authentic video, the use of video with beginning level students, and some factors to consider when planning video activities.

Why use video for listening practice?

Listening typically occurs in conjunction with visual information. Take an imaginary snapshot of yourself right now, as you are, and then examine the "picture" for clues of what is going on; now add the "audio." Yes! The visual component plays a key role in understanding the aural message.

Video presents the viewer with information conveyed via aural and visual channels. Rather than making competing demands for cognitive resources, each channel seems to contribute to the processing effort in specialized but complementary ways: the visual channel

taps into bottom-up processes, focusing on details; and the aural channel taps into top-down processes, drawing upon information, or schemata, stored in memory.

The addition of the visual component seems to be particularly helpful to learners who are not knowledgeable about the information being presented, as the visual input may provide those additional details necessary to elaborate or relate the message to existing knowledge. That is, if one has insufficient prior content or linguistic knowledge, the visual input may provide the information necessary to make the inferences to fill in the gaps in the message.

Second language learners are often exclusively exposed to modified language. Modified language may contain features such as simplified vocabulary, slowed rate of speech, unnatural intonation and rhythm, complete sentences as utterances, little overlap between speakers, or no background noise. No wonder they can't communicate in a "native" setting: these materials do not prepare students for real-life listening tasks.

Practicing listening skills with authentic materials and different types of spoken language allows students to experience language as it functions in the target culture, fosters students' confidence in their listening skills, and may help reduce their anxieties about interacting with native speakers. Authentic video segments can capture the language in all of its linguistic and sociocultural complexity, something that we cannot replicate in the classroom in any other way.

Are authentic videos too much for beginning students?

The answer to this question depends on the video segments you have in mind and the listening tasks the students will complete. If both video and listening task are carefully selected, keeping in mind the instructional objectives of the lesson and the proficiency level and the interests of your students, then the answer is: no, it is not too much for beginning students.

Rubin (1995) mentions that video, language/textual, and learner characteristics must be factored into the selection of a video segment. The following factors must be considered:

- the amount of contextual support—physical settings or props, action, and the interaction between participants should provide clues to meaning;
- a segment with a story line adds predictability and a common theme, making it easier to predict and test predictions;
- sequences which have a continuous story line should have closure;
- the quality of the video and audio should be clear;
- the speech delivery (e.g., strong accents, rapid speech), density of language (e.g., newscasts vs. dramas), the presence of cognates or recognizable places or persons, and the amount of background knowledge required should be examined.

Let us say that you are interested in showing a particular video, it fits very well with the content you are covering in class, but after examining it in light of the above factors it comes up short. The segment is a newscast and a bit more dense than you think your students can handle; it also has a series of "talking heads" in addition to the images. Do you give up on the

video? Consider what you want your students to get from the segment: can you design listening tasks which will facilitate your objectives?

We can develop listening materials by manipulating two variables: the input (the language that the learner hears) or the tasks we set for the learner. We can design tasks which render authentic videotexts accessible to students, at any level, by making the listening task simpler, thus artificially reducing the level of comprehension difficulty. Understanding is then defined by the design and focus of the task and not by the text. So, you don't have to give up on the video if there is a pedagogically sound reason for using it. Instead, you prepare your students well in the pre-listening stage and provide them with listening tasks that will enable them to successfully achieve their purpose for listening and your instructional objectives.

Other factors to consider when teaching with video

Video instructional materials fulfill the role of mediator between the viewer and the videotext.

The listening tasks must supply the missing links and provide the necessary assistance for negotiation of meaning.

Build from the general or from the particular.

Listening tasks can lead students from the overall idea to the details (from getting the gist to detail comprehension), or direct them to small pieces of new information which will help them construct meaning (listening for known vocabulary and making predictions on the basis of that vocabulary).

Treat the material in multiple cycles.

Go through the same materials several times, each time guided by specific tasks, increasing the depth and range of understanding with each cycle. You will be able to work with longer videotexts if you break them up into smaller segments and work each segment individually, creating a "chain" of comprehension.

The level of comprehension achieved should be dependent on the instructional goals.

These goals, in turn, should be dependent on the students' level of proficiency.

Students should not expect to understand every word, but learn to accept global comprehension.

Make sure that students understand that you will set the standard of comprehension for the segment. Practice first with getting the gist of short segments or parts of segments. Raise the standard as the students' proficiency increases.

Give students practice in "reading" environmental clues which are not directly part of the verbal message.

Comprehension is aided by extralinguistic clues such as setting, what people are wearing, or background noises, and by paralinguistic clues such as gestures, intonation, or facial expressions.

PART TWO

One-way Listening

Working with textbook tape programs and video materials

The quality of textbook tape programs varies widely. Audiocassette programs are accompanied by a lab manual which is almost always packaged with the student workbook. Most often the two are separated by sections, although some workbooks integrate the listening exercises with the writing exercises by chapter. The listening component usually includes pronunciation practice, especially at the beginning levels. Recently, more textbooks are integrating listening exercises into the lessons in the student text, offering a student tape to complete listening assignments at home.

Listening selections include a range of materials, although typically one finds scripted and semi-scripted materials with some authentic selections. Semi-scripted listening materials are those where the persons on tape improvise around a given topic and preset parameters, in this way more closely approaching authentic conversation. A variety of responses are also called for, the most frequent responses being selecting the correct picture, word, or phrase; true/false; filling in grids; and cloze (fill-in) exercises.

The greatest challenges with textbook tape programs are integrating the listening experiences into the classroom instruction and keeping up student interest and motivation. These challenges partially arise from the fact that most textbook listening programs emphasize product (right or wrong answer) over process (how to get meaning from the selection), as well as from the fact that the listening activities are usually carried out as an add-on, away from the classroom.

The suggestions given in the "Matching Your Goals and Objectives" and the "Planning the Listening Lesson" sections can serve as starting points both to evaluate and adapt the exercises in your listening programs. You can begin by raising your students' awareness of the importance of listening practice to their language learning. At the beginning of the course you can orient students to the tape program by completing the exercises in class and discussing the different strategies they use to answer the questions. It is a good idea to periodically complete some of the lab exercises in class to maintain the link to the regular instructional program and to check on the effectiveness of the exercises themselves.

Many textbook programs offer a videotape with a variety of segments as ancillary materials. Some also offer accompanying viewing materials, exercises to support the viewing of the video. As with the audio tape programs, the quality of these videos and materials vary; the suggestions given here for dealing with cassette tape programs apply to videotape programs as well.

Activities for teaching and practicing listening strategies

The activities listed below are organized according to the type of cognitive strategy they model. Remember that **cognitive strategies** are ways of dealing with the listening input. Most

of these activities can be used with video as well as with other types of listening materials. Singly or in combination, these activities promote the following listening behaviors: prediction and anticipation of the content, hypothesis formation, guessing and filling in gaps, selecting relevant and non-relevant information, learning to tolerate less than word by word comprehension, and global listening to get the meaning of the message.

Skimming—listening for the gist or main idea:

- give or select a title;
- select the main idea—various levels of difficulty: select a picture, choose a phrase (multiple choice), answer true/false, or write the main idea.

Scanning—listening/viewing for specific details:

- scan for keywords given in advance;
- write or tick off a list of items—categories may be content related or grammar related;
- listen/view a segment, and stop the tape/speaker when the answer to a previously posed question or a particular word or expression is heard;
- question and answer—scan a segment for specific information; response type may be at various levels of difficulty ranging from circling a picture to writing the answer;
- visual scan—scan for specific extralinguistic information in the setting or paralinguistic details such as gestures or body language in a silent (volume turned off) clip.

Inferencing—using the linguistic and visual information in the text to guess at the meaning of what is heard, to predict outcomes, or to fill in missing information:

- (video) preview a segment by fast forwarding and playing short clips without sound; make predictions based on the preview;
- gaps in dialogue—listen to two or three lines of dialogue and guess the next line; or assume a speaker's part and produce his/her lines;
- (video) watch a silent clip and make inferences based on extralinguistic and paralinguistic information;
- predict the content of the listening text based on a title;
- (video) watch a silent clip and predict the dialogue (may be done as role play);
- for sequential viewing of texts with a story line—predict what will happen in the next segment and give reasons on which the predictions are based; after viewing the segment, check both the prediction and the supporting reasons.

Summarizing—making a condensed version of the listening text or of parts of the text:

- paraphrase a dialogue;
- choose the best summary (response format will dictate level of difficulty—see skimming);
- agree or disagree with a list of summary statements; correct the statements;

- give lead sentences and summarize the text by parts, filling in the details which describe the lead sentence (can be done in narrative or outline form);
- create outline;
- (short segment/passage) list as many words heard/recalled as possible; use those words to summarize the segment/passage;
- order exact lines of dialogue;
- order paraphrases of lines of dialogue;
- (texts with story line) write plot summaries focusing in turn on each character in a story.

Present these cognitive strategies in combination when you design your listening activities, as they will more closely reflect the way we naturally listen, e.g., looking at a title, making a prediction, and scanning for details to confirm the prediction. Listening tasks should also integrate the three **metacognitive strategies** discussed earlier.

Planning for the listening task:

- set a purpose or decide in advance what to listen for;
- decide if more linguistic knowledge or background knowledge of the topic is needed (e.g., review the imperative before listening to a recipe);
- determine whether to enter the text from the top-down (attend to the overall meaning) or from the bottom-up (focus on the words and phrases).

Monitoring comprehension:

- verify predictions and check for inaccurate guesses;
- decide what is and is not important to understand;
- listen/view again to check comprehension;
- ask for help.

Evaluating comprehension and strategy use:

- evaluate comprehension in a particular task;
- evaluate overall progress in listening and in particular types of listening tasks;
- decide if the strategies used were appropriate for the purpose and for the task;
- modify strategies if necessary.

A viewing guide

Figure 2 (at the end of the text) shows a possible plan for integrating cognitive and metacognitive strategies for the viewing of video. This is a generic outline and can be used as a "road map" for in- class or out-of-class viewing assignments. It is suggested that you model and practice this process in class at least once before asking students to use it for independent viewing. Note that you may use it with videos which have worksheets as well as with those which have no accompanying materials. If the latter is the case, the students will, in effect, create their own worksheet as they work through the video.

Two-way Listening in the Classroom: Teacher and Peer Interaction

While, for practical reasons, most of the listening activities we do in the classroom are one-way activities where students fulfill the roles of overhearers or audience members, we must not forget that the greater part of real-world listening occurs in the context of conversation, with the speaker and listener exchanging roles as they negotiate meaning. The skills necessary for negotiating meaning in interactive two-way communication are not within the scope of this module, yet three specific skills must be mentioned in the context of two-way listening instruction. These skills are of primary importance to foreign language listeners/speakers if they are to hold a successful conversation:

- they must be able to identify the topic of the conversation, especially in ambiguous or vague messages;
- they must be able to make predictions as to the direction the conversation will take;
- they must be able to recognize when there is a comprehension problem and signal when they don't have enough information to make a response, by asking for additional information or clarification.

Morley (1991) suggests that students be given the opportunity to practice these skills in small group activities where a "speaker" presents a short five-minute story, demonstration, or description. The rest of the group act as "listeners" whose responsibility it is to negotiate meaning by asking different types of questions. She suggests questions such as: "Could you repeat the last thing you said?" (repetition), "I don't understand what you mean by... Could you explain it again?" (paraphrase), "Do you mean that..." (clarification), "Please tell us more about..." (elaboration), "How does that relate to..." (extension), and "Why did you say..." (challenge). Students tend to limit themselves to repetition-type requests and thus should be given a range of questions to stimulate depth and variety.

Summary

Listening is not just hearing and decoding words and phrases. Listening is a very active process of constructing meaning from the text and from the listener's background knowledge and knowledge of the language. Listening comprehension involves hearing, paying attention, understanding, and remembering. These processes are not linear; they operate interactively.

Listening strategies are "hands-on" listening skills which relate directly to the passage or listening text. Some listening strategies are cognitive. Comprehension can be initiated from the top-down (when they depend on the listener's prior knowledge, like inferencing) or from the bottom-up (when comprehension begins with the language in the listening text, like scanning for details).

Metacognitive listening strategies are generic types of strategies which are used with all kinds of tasks and skills. They help us plan, monitor, and evaluate our learning. Proficient listeners are aware of their listening processes and of the strategies they use. They know many different strategies and know which to use depending on their purpose for listening. We can teach students to be effective listeners by modeling strategic listening behaviors.

The listener's role (as participant, addressee, audience member, or overhearer), the listening mode (one-way or two-way), the function of the communication (interactional or transactional), and the purpose of the listening task must be taken into consideration when setting the goals and objectives of the listening program.

These criteria will help you evaluate, adapt, or design listening tasks: contextualize the task; specify the goal and the response; include bottom-up, top-down, interactional, and transactional activities; match the activities to the students' proficiency level; make too-difficult texts usable by adjusting the difficulty of the task; and model and practice listening strategies.

Prepare your students for the listening task with pre-listening activities and follow up the while-listening exercises with post-listening comprehension, evaluation, or extension activities.

Authentic video contextualizes language and offers a cultural dimension difficult to duplicate in the classroom. Reduce the level of difficulty of a video by designing level-appropriate tasks, and by going through the video several times, each time with a different purpose. Teach your students not to hang on every word by giving them global listening tasks and by encouraging them to rely more on the visual input.

Integrate listening practice with practice in other skills, especially with speaking practice. Remember that listening is the better half of speaking.

Don't accept your textbook listening program uncritically; evaluate the activities and modify them or supplement them when they don't fit your listening goals and objectives.

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Vann, R. J., and Abraham, R. G. (1990). Strategies of unsuccessful language learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 24, 177-198.

Suggested Additional Reading

Mendelsohn, D. J. and Rubin, J. (1995). *A guide for the teaching of second language listening*. San Diego, CA: Dominie Press.

This volume is directed at teachers-in-training. The chapters combine theory and practice in a variety of topics, including: assessment, pronunciation practice, listening strategies, teaching with video, interactive listening strategies, and academic listening.

Morley, J. (1991). Listening comprehension in second/foreign language instruction. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 81-106). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

An excellent overview of listening as a skill and of listening comprehension instruction. Morley presents principles for developing listening comprehension activities and materials, and techniques and activities for interactional and transactional listening.

Nunan, D. and Miller, L. (Eds.). (1995). *New ways in teaching listening*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL, Inc.

A collection of practical ideas for teaching listening. The activities are presented under these categories: Part I, Developing cognitive strategies—listening for the main idea, listening for details, and predicting; Part II, Developing listening with other skills—listening and speaking, listening and pronunciation, and listening and vocabulary; Part III, Listening to authentic material; and Part IV, Using technology.

Peterson, P. W. (1991). A synthesis of methods for interactive listening. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 106-122). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Peterson presents a developmental view of listening skills. She profiles beginning, intermediate and advanced level students and provides suggestions for bottom-up, top-down, and interactive activities for each level.

Underwood, M. (1989). *Teaching listening*. Longman Group, Ltd.

The author approaches listening instruction from a pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening perspective. Background information on the teacher's role in setting objectives for listening lessons and in the preparation of listening materials is presented. The sample listening activities are classified according to the suggested pre-/while-/post- stages.

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Figure 1 Information-Processing Model of Listening Comprehension

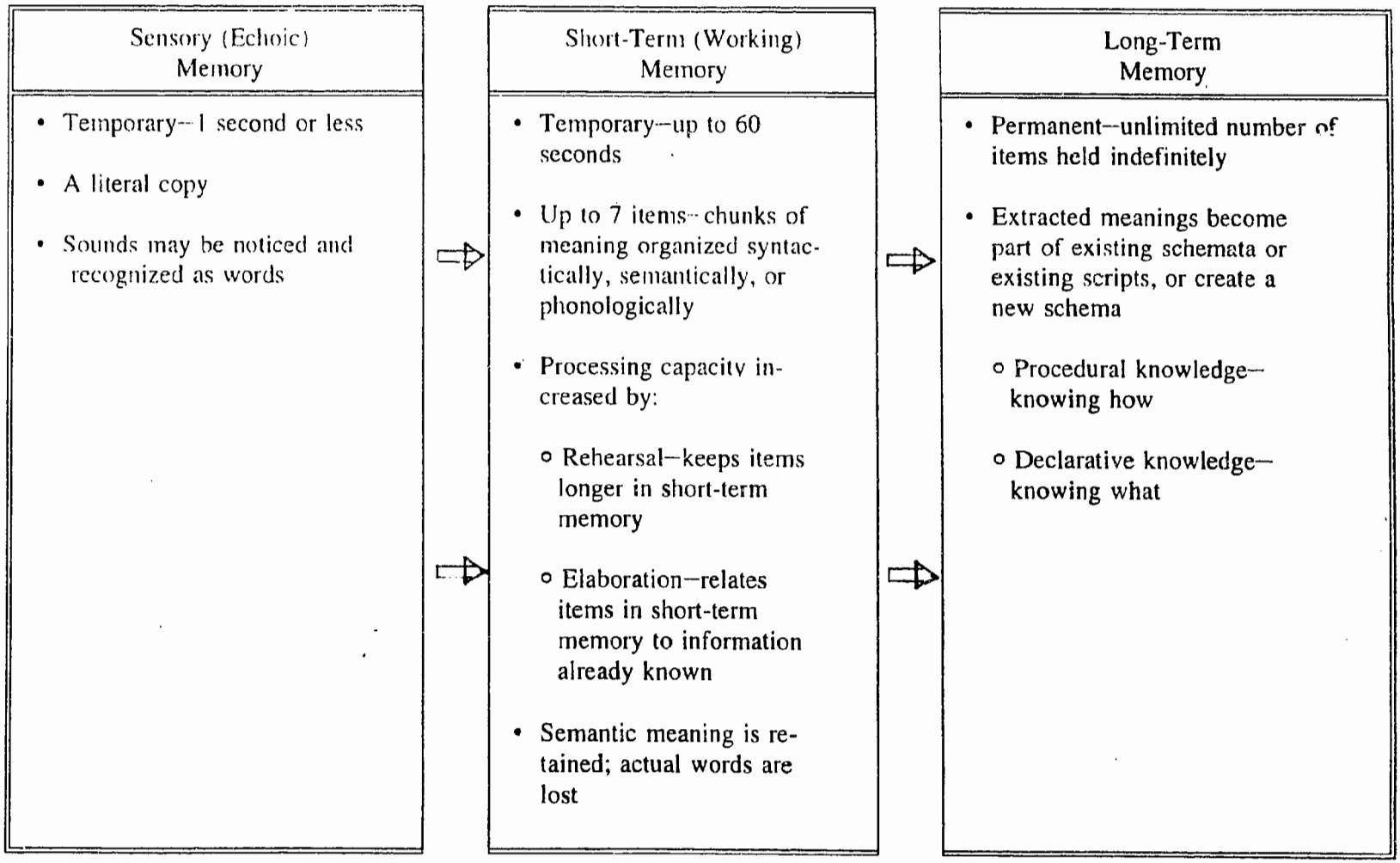

Table 1 Goals for Listening Comprehension

Identification	recognizing or discriminating specific aspects of the message, e.g., sounds, categories of words, morphological distinctions
Orientation	determining the important facts about a text, e.g., topic, text type, setting
Main idea comprehension	identifying the higher-order ideas
Detail comprehension	identifying supporting details
Full comprehension	understanding both main ideas and details
Replication	reproducing the message orally or in written form

Table 2 Listener Response Categories

Doing	a physical response	following directions, such as in Total Physical Response (TPR)
Choosing	among several options	selecting, matching, ordering
Transferring	information from the aural form to another modality	filling in a graph, tracing a route
Answering	questions about specific information in the text	open-ended, short-answer, or multiple choice questions
Condensing	synthesizing the information	outlining, taking notes, captioning pictures
Extending	going beyond the text	creating an ending, changing the text
Duplicating	the product of replication	repetition, dictation, transcription
Modeling	imitating the features of the text or the text itself	role play, telling a story
Conversing	an interaction with the text	filling in a taped dialogue, interactive video programs

Figure 2 Strategies for Viewing

I. Plan for your viewing.
- If you have a vocabulary list:
  1. Write the equivalents of the words you know.
  2. Return to the list after you have viewed with sound and review the list. Has the context helped you guess the meaning of other words? Confirmed the words you knew?
- If you don't have a vocabulary list:
  1. Note the title and view without sound (if a short segment), or preview with the Fast Forward button.
  2. Write your own vocabulary list and look up the meanings.

II. Preview the segment.
- View the entire segment without sound (if it is short) or preview it with the Fast Forward button.
  1. What kind of program is it? news? documentary? interview? game show? comedy? drama?
  2. What do you think is going on?
- View the entire segment with sound (if it is short) or preview it by alternately fast forwarding, playing it for few seconds in real time, and fast forwarding again.
- Make a list of predictions about the segment.
- Decide how to break down the segment for more intensive viewing.
- Go over your worksheet if you have one.

III. View intensively by sections using the Fast Forward and Rewind buttons.
- For each section:
  1. What do you learn from the images?
  2. Jot down key words you understood.
  3. Monitor your comprehension: Check—do the words/images support each other?
  4. If you have a worksheet, answer the questions pertaining to the section.
  5. If you don't have a worksheet, write a short summary of the section. What was it about?
  6. Continue to the next section.

IV. Monitor your comprehension.
- Within the section (see III.3 above).
- Overall comprehension:
  1. Does it fit with your initial ideas/predictions?
  2. Does your summary (or your answers) for each section make sense in the context of the other sections?

V. Evaluate your viewing comprehension progress.